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## FOUR YEARS OF BATTLE AT "BLACKBIRD" ROOSTS: A DISCUSSION OF METHODS AND RESULTS AT AMES, IOWA

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When birds assemble daily by thousands to roost in shade trees in residential areas of cities or towns, the resulting noise, the stench caused by their droppings, and the bespeckled sidewalks and parked automobiles are not without their impact on the people. Quite understandably the usual response sooner or later is to attempt to oust the birds and to drive them from the vicinity.

Ames, Iowa, has had a roosting problem of many years standing. Numerically, the chief offending birds have been the Common Grackles (*Quiscalus quiscula*), but associated with them have been many Starlings (*Sturnus vulgaris*), Brown-headed Cowbirds (*Molothrus ater*), Robins (*Turdus migratorius*), and occasionally some other species. These birds and their roosting habits received the concentrated attention of the writer for four years, 1949 to 1952. Although the control of roosting was not under investigation, many human efforts in that direction were observed during those years, examples thereof and the responses of the birds to them, forming the basis for this paper. As will be seen, the people tried sundry methods to manage the birds, and had various degrees of success. Nearly all endeavors, it might be said at the outset, were by individual citizens, and no organized attempts were made by the community as a whole.

At only one site, as far as was learned, did the residents react with any degree of favor toward the roosting birds. These people, a man and his wife, seemed to enjoy the presence of the many creatures in their trees each night, and never attempted to molest them in any way. At all other places they were not welcomed at all, and at best were only grudgingly tolerated.

The most common methods employed by the people in attempting to prevent the birds from settling in their trees in the first place, or to dislocate roosts already established, involved the making of sudden loud noises. At one residence, for instance, a snow shovel was beat upon the sidewalk persistently, night after night, at a time when the evening flight of birds was crossing the premises. Although it was difficult to evaluate the results, the birds were never known to roost in the tall American elms (*Ulmus americanus*) in front of this home, despite the presence of a well-formed major roost site with a similar stand of trees only a block away. At most, the trees on this property were used only as stopping places by newly-arrived birds, and then only if and when noise-making ceased for a few minutes.

Most anti-bird-noise-making activities, of course, dealt with attempts to disrupt roosts that had been in existence for some time, and not with endeavors to prevent their formation. The "similar stand of trees" mentioned above was one of the scenes of such efforts. One of the ladies in the area, having reached the limits of her patience as far as the birds were concerned, for several evenings beat vigorously with a board upon a cement railing on her porch during the hour or so when the birds were trying to enter her trees. In a matter of only a few days the bird population in her immediate neighborhood decreased noticeably. Unfortunately the lady's exasperation was not as great as she had imagined. She ceased her activities after a few days, and the lack of persistence may have prevented complete abandonment of the site by the birds. The noise, it must be added, did not cause the birds

to fly very far on any one evening, for they usually lit in trees less than a block away. Neither were the birds seriously frightened, for as soon as noise-making was stopped, at least some of them invariably returned.

Ordinarily the activities directed against the birds were not cooperative affairs but were efforts made by individual persons. For two or three days, though, a number of people, living on a street with a well-established roost which occupied much of one block, simultaneously resorted to noise-making, mostly by slapping boards together. The resulting din and clatter, which would have served excellently as a charivari, drove the birds back and forth wildly early in the evening, but caused few if any of them to leave the area. At least most of the creatures finally perched in the trees for the night, in spite of the noise, and thereafter responded only with calls and some rustling of wings. What the effects might have been had efforts been more sustained is not known, for only one man in the area remained active after a few evenings.

A bicycle horn inserted in a washing machine agitator provided one of the residents in another area with a noise-maker of ear-splitting potential. With it she declared she had driven the "blackbirds" from the American elm in her back yard for two successive years. She may well have been correct, but the tree was a lone tree, one that seemed to be harboring overflow population. The near edge of a major roost site, composed of close grouping of black maples, (*Acer nigrum*), was not more than 150 feet away, and the birds that were seen to leave her tree flew toward it. In spite of the relative nearness to the black maples, her horn, used only on her own premises, had no visible effects upon the birds there.

One of the electricians in Ames tried a more technical approach to noise-making. Equipped with an electronic oscillator, he experimented a few evenings with supersonic frequencies as well as with audible sounds of very high pitch. His only results were vigorous complaints from his neighbors whenever he adjusted his instrument for sonic ranges. Albert R. Brand and P. Paul Kellogg (Auditory Responses of Starlings, English Sparrows, and Domestic Pigeons. *Wilson Bulletin*, 51 (1):38-41, 1939) showed that Starlings apparently did not respond to frequencies above 15,000 vibrations per second, and the above experiment suggested that perhaps Common Grackles, and other occupants of the roost, also were not receptive of the high-frequency sounds, at least not receptive enough to be driven from the trees.

Second only to noise-making, beams of light from flashlights or other devices were the most commonly tried expedients to break up roost sites. As was true for noises, the lights produced somewhat indefinite results. At only one site, to the writer's knowledge, was there any persistence in the efforts, and then it was futile because of the weak beams caused by obviously worn-out dry cells. However, even bright lights, when used off and on for only an evening or so, proved of little value at several roost sites. Although the beams disturbed the birds considerably early in the evening, they later provoked only a few calls, and still later no response at all; and while it was true that some birds left the trees, apparently most of them remained.

Combinations of noise-making and light beams were noted a number of times, sometimes with favorable results. The bird population, for instance, thinned noticeably at one end of a large, block-long roost after one of the citizens persistently used the noise from exploding cap-gun caps as well as bright flashlight beams. The results were accomplished in about three weeks and with \$10.00 worth of the toy explosives. No effects were noted on the roost at the other end of the block, however. A roost of smaller dimensions, but which had been in existence for only four or five nights and hence was not as firmly established as the one mentioned above, was also disrupted, seemingly because several people in the block disturbed them for several nights with noise and flashlight beams.



Some combination activities were fruitful on smaller scales. At one site, for example, the use of gravel thrown into the tree, flashlight, and very bright spotlight, caused the roosting birds to abandon two Norway maples (*Acer platanoides*). Nevertheless, the birds did not fly far off, and some of them went no farther than to the trees across the street. At another site, some children, who employed boards slapped together and a bright flashlight beam, completely emptied several black maples of the birds. Not disturbed during the early part of the evening, the birds responded in a panic to the children's treatment which came just as the birds had quieted for the night.

Shooting at the birds with shotguns, violent though it may seem, had no noticeable permanent effects as it was usually practiced. Most people who resorted to guns fired only a shot or two on some one evening, and then ceased in their efforts. At places where shooting was persistent, on the other hand, local clearing of roost trees resulted. The clearing was not always on a permanent basis however, for in some cases the birds returned after a few weeks.

For most effectiveness, apparently, shooting had to be done before the birds settled for the night. This was shown by the experience of one of the residents who used a 410-gauge shotgun. One evening he fired a number of shells at the birds in his trees, from the time they arrived until they had settled for the night. The earlier shots invariably caused the birds to fly madly about, though few casualties were inflicted, but as the evening wore on the tendency to fly decreased. The last shot for the evening was fired into the tree when the birds were more or less settled. Though it killed two Common Grackles and one Starling, not a single bird was seen to leave the tree. Similar shooting earlier in the month was reported to have given similar results. Probably because the shooting was not repeated on succeeding days, no permanent results were noted at this site.

Shooting sometimes proved to be successful even in a surprisingly short time. A catalpa (*Catalpa bignonioides*) grove at the west edge of the Maney Memorial Park, was cleared of its estimated 20,000 birds in only three nights of shooting with a 12-gauge shotgun, and with only 17 shells. Shooting the first night was performed rather late, after the birds had begun to settle, and had no visible results. Shots fired from the time the birds arrived on the other two nights gave complete success. One man did all the shooting, and less than 10 birds were killed. It must be noted, however, that several boys with compressed air guns had shot in the grove sporadically for a week or more prior to the shotgun attack, and may well have been a factor in causing the birds to move so quickly.

Though more strictly a noise-making method than shooting, an interesting method tried by a man and his wife should be mentioned here. Fire-crackers, which were tied to a piece of wood of manageable size, were ignited and tossed into the trees among the birds where they exploded. With no known casualties, three nights of such efforts succeeded in moving thousands of birds that had roosted there for weeks. New roost sites were established by the birds several blocks away. After a few weeks some of the birds returned to the former site, but they did not begin to approach their former numbers there.

Other methods used in trying to break up roost sites included pounding on the trees with an axe. Tried at several places, it succeeded in more damage to trees than in permanent success with the birds. Streams of water from garden hoses were also tried by some people, but were not seen to move a single bird. The dense foliage of the black maples, on which the water was directed, permitted little water to reach the creatures. Hitting branches with a long pole caused a few birds to leave the trees where tried,

but it was never carried on persistently enough to get lasting results. Chemical smokers, such as formerly used in driving animals from dens, were tried on a still evening beneath one black maple. It was reported that many birds left the tree in response to the smoke and that the tree had a noticeably smaller roosting population for several nights following. Later, with no further efforts directed against them, the birds returned in numbers.

The most drastic of control measures, the complete removal of the shade trees with its consequent economic effects on property values, was resorted to at several locations in Ames. Several large black maples at one place, two huge American elms at another, three American elms at a third site, and several good-sized black maples in another area, were all cut down just to get rid of the gregarious birds.

Everything considered, therefore, it must be said that the attempts of the residents of Ames to manage the roosting of gregarious wild birds from 1949 to 1952 were successful only in small part. Positive results, where they were obtained at all, were largely local, often rather limited, and sometimes quite temporary. Methods used were ordinarily most effective, if at all, when applied during the early part of the evening, and had the most effect if used near the roost trees in question. There was never any evidence that efforts against the birds in one year, with the obvious exception of tree removal, had any effect on their behavior the next season. The people were seldom persistent in their anti-bird activities, and almost always resorted to their various expedients on an individual rather than on an organized basis.

## BIRDS OF SCOTT COUNTY, IOWA: 1900-1925

By JAMES HODGES

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The purpose of this paper is to summarize the status of bird life of Scott County, Iowa, during the period of 1900 to 1925. The observations of four observers are represented, composed of both previously published material and an unpublished manuscript. Two of the published items are generally unavailable. This paper presents for the first time the observations of this group in composite form. The net result of the compilation is to give a very graphic picture of bird life in this locality a quarter century ago plus a view of the normal limitations on bird study during this period.

### THE OBSERVERS

There were four active observers in the Scott County area from 1900-1925. Perhaps the most active student was Burtis H. Wilson, who published the results of his observations in an annotated list in 1906. The material in his many journals has been summarized by Hodges in an earlier paper.

J. H. Paarmann was probably better known locally than other observers because of his position with the Davenport Academy of Science. In 1903 his institution (now the Davenport Public Museum) published a paper on the birds of Davenport. In an unpublished manuscript Paarmann summarized his work on birds from 1903 through 1924. It was obvious after examining these two pieces of source material that Paarmann was not very familiar with the area bird life—perhaps more prone to rely on the opinion of others than his own observations. However, credit must be given to Paarmann for making bird study popular in this area a quarter of a century ago.

Hugo H. Schroeder was a careful observer. He published his observations in 1919 in a local newspaper. Schroeder became quite well known in his later years as a photographer of birds.

The final observer of this group, J. J. Schaefer, was a resident of Port Byron, Illinois. Port Byron is opposite LeClaire, Iowa, which is located in Scott County. Since the observations of Schaefer reflect the same general geographical area he is included in this resume.

## LIST OF SPECIES

RESIDENT:	Woodcock
Cooper's Hawk	Upland Plover
Red-tailed Hawk	Spotted Sandpiper
Ruffed Grouse	Mourning Dove
Prairie Chicken	Yellow-billed Cuckoo
Bobwhite	Black-billed Cuckoo
Ring-necked Pheasant	Whip-poor-will
Screech Owl	Nighthawk
Great Horned Owl	Chimney Swift
Barred Owl	Ruby-throated Hummingbird
Long-eared Owl	Belted Kingfisher
Short-eared Owl	Flicker
Red-bellied Woodpecker	Red-headed Woodpecker
Hairy Woodpecker	Kingbird
Downy Woodpecker	Crested Flycatcher
Horned Lark	Phoebe
Blue Jay	Acadian Flycatcher
Crow	Traill's Flycatcher
Black-capped Chickadee	Least Flycatcher
Tufted Titmouse	Wood Pewee
White-breasted Nuthatch	Tree Swallow
House Sparrow	Bank Swallow
Cardinal	Rough-winged Swallow
Goldfinch	Barn Swallow
ACCIDENTAL:	Cliff Swallow
Golden Eagle	Purple Martin
Snowy Owl	House Wren
Blue Grosbeak	Carolina Wren
WINTER VISITORS:	Catbird
Rough-legged Hawk	Brown Thrasher
Saw-whet Owl	Robin
Brown Creeper	Wood Thrush
Bohemian Waxwing	Bluebird
Northern Shrike	Blue-gray Gnatcatcher
Evening Grosbeak	Cedar Waxwing
Redpoll	Migrant Shrike
Red Crossbill	Bell's Vireo
Pine Siskin	Yellow-throated Vireo
Slate-colored Junco	Red-eyed Vireo
Tree Sparrow	Warbling Vireo
Lapland Longspur	Prothonotary Warbler
BREEDING:	Blue-winged Warbler
Green Heron	Yellow Warbler
Black-crowned Night Heron	Ovenbird
American Bittern	Yellowthroat
Least Bittern	Yellow-breasted Chat
Sharp-shinned Hawk	Redstart
Red-shouldered Hawk	Bobolink
Marsh Hawk	Meadowlark
Sparrow Hawk	Redwinged Blackbird
Sora	Orchard Oriole
Killdeer	Baltimore Oriole



Common Grackle  
Brown-headed Cowbird  
Scarlet Tanager  
Rose-breasted Grosbeak  
Indigo Bunting  
Dickcissel  
Towhee  
Grasshopper Sparrow  
Vesper Sparrow  
Lark Sparrow  
Chipping Sparrow  
Field Sparrow  
Song Sparrow

## MIGRANTS:

Loon  
Pied-billed Grebe  
White Pelican  
Double-crested Cormorant  
Great Blue Heron  
American Egret  
Little Blue Heron  
Whistling Swan  
Canada Goose  
Snow Goose  
Mallard  
Black Duck  
Pintail  
Blue-winged Teal  
Canvasback  
Lesser Scaup  
Common Goldeneye  
Bufflehead  
Ruddy Duck  
Hooded Merganser  
Common Merganser  
Red-breasted Merganser  
Turkey Vulture  
Broad-winged Hawk  
Swainson's Hawk  
Bald Eagle  
Sandhill Crane  
King Rail  
Virginia Rail  
Yellow Rail  
Coot  
American Golden Plover  
Wilson's Snipe  
Solitary Sandpiper  
Pectoral Sandpiper  
Least Sandpiper  
Red-backed Sandpiper  
Herring Gull  
Ring-billed Gull  
Franklin's Gull  
Forster's Tern  
Common Tern  
Caspian Tern

Black Tern  
Passenger Pigeon  
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker  
Yellow-bellied Flycatcher  
Olive-sided Flycatcher  
Red-breasted Nuthatch  
Bewick's Wren  
Marsh Wren  
Hermit Thrush  
Olive-backed Thrush  
Gray-cheeked Thrush  
Veery  
Golden-crowned Kinglet  
Ruby-crowned Kinglet  
Water Pipit  
Blue-headed Vireo  
Philadelphia Vireo  
Black-and-white Warbler  
Golden-winged Warbler  
Tennessee Warbler  
Orange-crowned Warbler  
Nashville Warbler  
Parula Warbler  
Magnolia Warbler  
Cape May Warbler  
Myrtle Warbler  
Black-throated Blue Warbler  
Black-throated Green Warbler  
Cerulean Warbler  
Blackburnian Warbler  
Chestnut-sided Warbler  
Bay-breasted Warbler  
Black-poll Warbler  
Pine Warbler  
Palm Warbler  
Northern Waterthrush  
Louisiana Waterthrush  
Grinnell's Waterthrush  
Connecticut Warbler  
Mourning Warbler  
Hooded Warbler  
Wilson's Warbler  
Canada Warbler  
Eastern Meadowlark  
Rusty Blackbird  
Summer Tanager  
Purple Finch  
Savannah Sparrow  
Leconte's Sparrow  
Nelson's Sparrow  
Harris' Sparrow  
White-crowned Sparrow  
White-throated Sparrow  
Fox Sparrow  
Lincoln's Sparrow  
Swamp Sparrow  
Smith's Longspur  
Snow Bunting

## SUMMARY

A summary of the four observers' lists gives the following picture of the Scott County, Iowa, avifauna from 1900 to 1925:

Resident .....	23 species
Accidental .....	3 species
Winter Visitors .....	12 species
Breeding .....	75 species
Migrant .....	93 species

Total ..... 206 species

A break-down of each observer's list would be as follows:

	1903	1906	Wilson	1918	1919	1923	1925
	Paarman	Wilson	Addendum	Schaefer	Schroeder	Schaefer	Paarman
Resident	17	15	1		15		12
Winter Visitors	6	9			4		9
Breeding	35	67		61	70		58
Migrant	24	75	18	61	63	34	77
Total	82	166	19	122	152	34	156

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## A FLYING TRIP TO VENEZUELA \*

By JOHN PAUL MOORE

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Leaving Miami on the morning of December 10, 1958, by Pan-American Airways, we made a short stop at Port-au-Prince, Haiti. From there we proceeded to La Guaira, the sea coast port, for Caracas, Venezuela.

Rising abruptly out of the tradition-haunted Caribbean, the northern coast of South America presented a green steepness which made me question whether a road went directly over this 5,000-foot ridge to Caracas in a valley nestled in rugged, jungle-covered mountains on the other side, so sharply do the mountains tilt into the sea here. Later I found that a new four-lane highway which cost over a million dollars per mile travels the 11 miles from La Guaira to Caracas by way of many tunnels, one being over 2 miles long.

Venezuela is a land rich in varied products, chief of which are gold, pearls, orchids, coffee, sugar and rum. Gold comes from Bolivar State, near the British Guiana border. More than a million dollars' worth of gold is exported each year through La Guaira. But the real wealth of Venezuela is in its oil. The fact that Venezuela is the third largest producer of oil in the

\* Moving pictures in color and a descriptive talk on this trip were given by Mr. Moore at the Keokuk convention of the Union, May 9, 1959.—Ed.



world has done much to place the country in the unique economic position of having no external and practically no internal debt. Yet because of high tariffs and many involved factors, the cost of living in Caracas and other Venezuelan cities is among the world's highest. A week's stay at the hotel cost me more than \$100.00. The price of bread was 64¢ and eggs were \$1.00 per dozen. The country's peculiar tariff structure makes staples cost more in proportion than luxuries. Bread is dear in Caracas, but champagne is cheap.

In Miami I had been told that in Caracas I would find beautiful flowers and lovely women. I found both in profusion. Never in all my travels have I seen so high a ratio of beautiful women, the result of the amalgamation of native South Americans, Spanish and Negroes.

All through the Caracas suburbs bougainvillea spills its magenta paint, and the acacias was also in full bloom. The "acacia" of Venezuela is an orange-flowered tree, better known elsewhere as the flamboyant. Originally a native of Madagascar, it has spread to all tropical America. So well-loved in Caracas are these flaming trees that the principal avenue of the exclusive La Florida suburb has been lined with rows of them and called Avenida de las Acacias.

Everywhere in the Venezuelan capital orchids bloom with the careless profligacy of daisies in Iowa. At the home of a commercial orchid grower in La Florida I saw a single plant that bore simultaneously more than 70 blossoms. Many thousands of dollars' worth of orchids are shipped as cut flowers to the United States.

I saw these beautiful flowers growing with frequency in the jungle trees and one would say they were common. Although the plants grow on trees, they are not parasites, since they live upon the moisture they take from the air. There was a large pale mauve blossom, the lip of which was strikingly marked in purple and gold. It was referred to as the Easter orchid. Another species I saw was the insect-like *Oncidium papilio*. As its name implies, it resembles a long-antennae, spotted orange butterfly tremulously perched on a slender green stalk.

In such a prolific flower world orchids are, of course, very cheap, costing only a few cents a blossom. Because of that arbitrary law which establishes the desirability of a thing in direct proportion to its cost and rarity, society misses of Caracas seldom wear orchids.

The simpler people put them to good use, however, as I found when the house maid put some in a saucepan with a little water to boil, and soon had a sweetish decoction that tasted like Chinese jasmine tea. She drank it to cure a cold. The drinking of orchid tea as a medicine I found is so common among domestics and country people that when such a person goes to a shop and buys only a blossom or two, the dealer will ask, "Shall I wrap them up or will you drink them here?"

If the buildings of central Caracas are grim-walled and enclosed, the villas of the city's suburbs are quite the opposite. Surrounded by gardens and formally landscaped grounds, they are of all types and periods of architecture. There are Elizabethan half-timbered cottages, neo-Gothic mansions, Spanish country houses, and modernistic conceptions.

The conduct of the belles of Caracas is governed by ancient rules. Chaperoning is very strict, and at all social functions the traditional Latin-American trio of mother, daughter, and suitor is much in evidence. Mothers accompany their daughters everywhere. It seemed to me, though, that Venezuelan mothers are most understanding. I saw them sit a whole evening in stoical silence, neither receiving nor expecting much attention.

At a downtown movie one night, I found succinct phrases of government educational propaganda printed on the reverse of the theater tickets. Two

I remember are: "Work! Do not expect everything from the government"; and "Soap costs less than a doctor's visit."

Until recently the white-collar class has had comparatively few representatives in Latin America. The ancient system of two widely separated castes has persisted: on the one hand is the aristocracy of family and wealth and on the other a general peonage of country people and laborers. Today the gap is being gradually bridged by a class of technically and commercially educated workers.

Caracas has two bull rings where a series of corridas are held each season. Bull fighters travel on a circuit of the Spanish and American plazas, and "big names" from Spain and Mexico often come to Caracas to display the art of cape and sword.

I went to a bull fight one hot Sunday afternoon in Maracay and what I saw I could neither call sporting nor a fight. To me it was just a bull slaughter. I am afraid our standard for good, enjoyable sportsmanship differs considerably from theirs. In fact, watching the first of six bulls being killed was such a gory, inhumane thing to see for the first time, I was sick at the stomach and I am not a squeamish person, either. One thing I am sure of, I have no desire ever to see another bull fight.

Though many of the streets of Caracas have recently been given names, few people refer to a location by the street it is on, but rather between what two corners it is located. The corner intersections have had titles since colonial days. Some of these corner names bear most colorful captions, but they were given these names so long ago I could not learn the origin of the less obvious terms. For instance, they could not explain the ironic juxtaposition of *The Solitary Soul* and *The Lovers*. Even more speculation was evoked by *Christ in Reverse*. But I laughed most heartily when I saw *Remove Pants*.

Near the municipal market of Caracas is a house preserved with veneration by the Venezuelan people. It has been aptly called "*The Birthplace of South American Independence*," for here, in 1783, was born Simon Bolivar, one of the greatest figures in the history of the Western Hemisphere.

Through a long series of political and military exploits, Bolivar brought about the independence from Spain of what are now Venezuela, Colombia, Ecuador, Bolivia, Peru and Panama. Unlike the Cuban rebellion leader, Bolivar refused public office and personal gain and accepted only the title "*Liberator*," bestowed in Caracas in 1813. The name of Bolivar is often linked with that of Washington as a founder of New World independence. Bolivar himself greatly admired Washington and constantly wore a miniature of the North American patriot. The picture had been presented to him by Washington's family.

On top of the mountain ridge that separates Caracas from the Caribbean Sea is located a new multimillion-dollar hotel, the Humboldt. To reach this beautiful hotel one travels up by cable car, the longest in the world. I took this ride just for the experience and found it well worth my time. On top of this cordillera, at an altitude in excess of 5,000 feet, I caught many large specimens of butterflies and moths for my collection, which now numbers into thousands from all parts of the world. Yes, I took my butterfly net with me when I went to South America. The same net produced specimens for me in New Guinea and the Philippine Islands.

However, butterflies and moths were not the only beautiful specimens of nature I saw on top of this jungle-covered mountain. The birds I saw were most brilliant and exquisite.

I am sure the readers of *Iowa Bird Life* are anxious to know more about my birding in Venezuela than perhaps they were in reading the above information, but I am afraid my report on birds will be a bit brief.

When I first arrived in Caracas, I visited every book store in search of a bird book on Venezuelan birds. None was available, but I was told in two stores that one book had been published. They said since it was a private publication, it would be impossible to get a copy. However, when my Venezuelan friends learned what I wanted, the word was passed on to the right people, and within two or three days I was handed a new copy of this book. Needless to say, the text of the book was in Spanish and I could not read it. The book and color plates were far from being very inclusive, with only a few species shown for each family. The book was beautiful as far as it went.

Trying to get a good look at most birds with binoculars was quite difficult because of the heavy foliage, and more so to get movies of them. I could classify many of the birds by the family to which they belonged. There were long-tailed hummingbirds, flycatchers, cuckoos, sparrows, etc. Some I could identify by the book but most of them I could not. I got several feet of film on the Cattle Egret. Black and Turkey Vultures dominated the sky. A species of grackle and an ani were common. In the jungles of Rancho Grande I saw many parrots as well as toucans.

I had a very enjoyable visit to Venezuela though it was much too short. The time I had allowed myself for making movies was cut out because Pan-American Airways found a seat for me to return to the United States on the day after I finished my work there. I had hoped to have about a week for shooting film.

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## A REPORT ON THE KEOKUK CONVENTION

By MYRLE M. BURK

Secy.-Treas., Iowa Ornithologists' Union

On Saturday, May 9, 1959, 70 members of the Iowa Ornithologists' Union and other bird observers met at the Keokuk Club, Keokuk, Iowa, for the 37th annual spring convention. Alois J. Weber, hospitable host to the society, with the help of friends, had made every provision for a pleasant and successful meeting. Mrs. George W. Toyne, Muscatine, arranged an interesting and instructive program. High praise and appreciation go to both. Mr. Weber was the only I.O.U. member in Keokuk, when the Executive Council decided to hold the 1959 convention there; and Mrs. Toyne was the only member at Muscatine when Mr. Moore asked her to be program chairman. The annual field trip was held on Sunday, May 10.

The members convened at 10:00 a.m., May 9, at the Keokuk Club for registration and the program. Mr. James Kettering, secretary of the Keokuk Chamber of Commerce, extended a cordial greeting, to which President John Paul Moore responded.

Peter C. Petersen, Jr., Davenport, presented the first paper, "A Field List of the Birds of the Tri-City Area," which was based on field work and observations by himself and Elton Fawks. They are endeavoring to map the bird habitats of the area with data on the occurrence of species, their frequency, breeding periods, and locality. The authors plan to make this material available in a booklet which will be valuable to the beginning bird student as well as those with more experience.

Edwin Meyer, Davenport, presented the paper entitled, "Wintering Bald Eagles at Davenport." This described carefully planned counts with moving pictures showing the flight, fishing methods, and other habits of our national bird.

John Paul Moore showed movies of Venezuela which he photographed while visiting that country recently. Beautiful scenes of the countryside and cities, the people, strange birds and brilliantly colored plants were vividly portrayed.



At 12:00 the meeting was adjourned for lunch and resumed at 1:30 p.m.

Elwood Martin, Iowa State College, presented the paper "Roosting Flights of Wood Ducks."

"A Nesting of the Whip-poor-will," by Dr. Robert Vane, Cedar Rapids, supplemented with pictures the fine article published in Iowa Bird Life, December, 1958.

"Arctic Wildlife," by S. H. MacDonald, University of Iowa, by picture and lecture described the birds of the far north.

Myrle L. Jones, Estherville, presented "Bird-banding," reviewing his experiences of eleven years in the field. He described methods of catching birds by luring them into traps baited with food or water; he described the nets and method of use.

Mr. Paul Dowling, ecologist, and field representative of Nature Conservancy at St. Louis and Washington, D.C., as guest speaker at the banquet Saturday evening, emphasized the necessity of saving natural and historical areas. Due to the need to find room for a growing population and its industrial activities, these are fast disappearing. Efforts should be made to save these areas for their cultural values. This duty lies not alone with the county conservation board, the state conservation commission, or the federal bureaus, but it also is the duty of the individual to agitate for the saving of a bit of prairie, woodland, dune area, seashore or lake shore. He praised the people of Iowa for the preservation of three prairie areas, Kalsow Prairie, Kahler Prairie, and Hayden Prairie, and for his leadership among the states in the conservation of such areas.

#### Proceedings of the Business Meetings

The Executive Council met at luncheon Saturday noon. Members present were: J. P. Moore, Lillian Serbousek, Fred Pierce, Bruce Stiles, Dr. Harold Ennis, Dr. Myrle M. Burke, and M. L. Jones.

The Executive Council moved that all Charter Members now living be made Honorary Members. The Charter Members now living are: Walter W. Bennett, Arnold's Park; Mrs. W. A. Kinnaird, West Des Moines; Wier Mills, Pierson; Arthur J. Palas, Postville; Fred J. Pierce, Winthrop; Charles J. Spiker, Branchport, N.Y.; B. O. Wolden, Estherville. Payment of dues for Honorary members is suspended. This was carried by later action at the business meeting.

The following committees were named: Auditing, Peter C. Petersen, Chairman, Mrs. Gladys Black, Edwin Meyer; Nominating, Dr. Robert F. Vane, Chairman, Myrle L. Jones, Mrs. Forrest Millikin; Resolutions, Dr. Martin L. Grant, Chairman, Dennis Carter, Myra Willis.

At 3:15 p.m. Saturday President Moore called the business meeting to order.

Secretary Burk read the report of the business meeting of the 1958 convention.

Editor Pierce, in his report, requested more co-operation from members. He asked them to send in more articles for publication, in order that the magazine might be more interesting. He described the development of the March, 1959, issue which contained the striking color plate of the Lazuli Bunting, a copy of a painting by Earnest W. Steffen, Cedar Rapids. Although there had been a long-time interest, this was the first color plate to be used; the cost had been prohibitive. The secretary was directed to write letters of appreciation to William Youngworth and Earnest W. Steffen.

Suggestions were made that other numbers of Iowa Bird Life with color plates be published. Charles C. Ayres, Jr., was appointed by the President to investigate the possibility of business houses sponsoring the cost of the color plates in return for advertising.

Dr. J. Harold Ennis reported on the duties of the Librarian. He explained that the duties include the storing and sale of back copies of Iowa Bird Life, sales of the Iowa Distributional List, and custodianship

of the library of the Union. Certain back issues of Iowa Bird Life are solicited by contributions or purchase; these are the scarce ones in stock.

Miss Gladys Gray, Des Moines, reported on the opposition to the passage of a bill for an open hunting season on Mourning Doves. She particularly cited the cooperation of the Iowa Farm Bureau.

The Secretary read a letter from Mrs. W. G. DuMont thanking the members of the Union for voting her to honorary membership.

At 2:00 p.m., following the Sunday bird trip, President Moore called the meeting to order.

Peter C. Petersen, Jr., chairman of the Auditing Committee, gave his report. The committee commended Dr. Myrle M. Burk for the neatness of the record. Dr. A. W. Meyer moved that the report of the Auditing Committee be accepted.

Dr. Robert Vane, chairman of the Nominating Committee, gave a list of nominees for officers. The Secretary was instructed to cast a unanimous ballot for these and they were elected (list of new officers given on the title page of this issue of Iowa Bird Life).

Dr. Martin L. Grant, chairman of the Resolutions Committee, presented the resolutions as drawn up by his committee.

The decision of the Executive Council that the fall meeting be held at Fort Defiance State Park, September 20, was reported by the President. Myrle L. Jones, host, suggested that there be an early morning field meeting; motel rooms are available, if members wish to come the previous day. Food will be provided and members will pay for the breakfast and luncheon.

The convention in 1960 will be at Waterloo, on May 14 and 15. Members of the Iowa Ornithologists' Union of Black Hawk County will be hosts.

Dr. Martin Grant conducted the compilation of the birds seen on the field trips Sunday morning. Two areas were covered, the River Road along the Mississippi and the Valley Road along the Des Moines River. Although heavy rain had fallen during the night, the sun shone and the temperature reached 73° F.

**Resolutions.**—1. Be it resolved that the deepest thanks be extended to the following people and organizations for their most important contribution to the I.O.U. in connection with the current convention.

a) To Alois J. Weber, chairman of the committee for local arrangements, and Corrine Carter for the careful preliminary planning and coordination of the physical arrangements.

b) To Mrs. George W. Toyne, Program Chairman, for securing the excellent speakers who have appeared here.

c) To the major participants in the program, as stated elsewhere here, the Misters Kettering, Petersen, Meyer, Moore, Martin, Vane, MacDonald, Jones and Dowling.

d) To Mrs. G. L. Huiskamp and Mrs. Forest Wood, and the Keokuk Chamber of Commerce for arrangements for the banquet and for registration.

e) To the Boy Scouts of Explorer Troup 43, for serving as guides on the field trip.

f) To Albert Berkowitz for generously volunteering to print the program another year.

2. Be it resolved that the membership of the I.O.U. express their deep appreciation to the following individuals for service above and beyond the call of duty during the past year:

a) To the officers, Pres. J. P. Moore, Vice-Pres. Lillian Serbousek, Sec.-Treas. Myrle M. Burk, Librarian J. Harold Ennis, and Executive Council members Bruce Stiles, James Sieh and C. Esther Copp, for their more than adequate service.

b) To two anonymous individuals for financing the printing of photographs in Iowa Bird Life.

c) To Earnest W. Steffen and Wm. Youngworth for their joint contributions as artist and sponsor toward producing the first color plate in Iowa Bird Life, the Lazuli Bunting, issue of March, 1959.

d) To Fred J. Pierce, the officer of longest continuous term of office, of greatest service, and most enduring contribution. It is no disparagement of the work of the other officers to note that long after the service of the rest of us is forgotten, the monument left by Editor Pierce, the magazine Iowa Bird Life, will remain as an imperishable memory.

3. Be it resolved that our congratulations be extended to the Mourning Dove, gentlest of our feathered friends and, fortunately, most numerous of the U.S. so-called game birds, which has managed to survive another attack on its primitive undisturbed natural population and cycle, and to all the people, members of the I.O.U. Committee and others, who have worked so diligently to maintain the status quo. May the dove always continue with us in pristine purity and undiminished numbers.

**Attendance Register.**—AMES, Elwood M. Martin, Dr. Milton W. Weller; CEDAR FALLS, Madeline Carpenter, Harold Chapman, Frances Crouter, Annette Haffner, Dean Halverson, Mrs. Chas. Schwanke, Maxine Schwanke, Mrs. Florence Spring, Gene Ulvestad, David Youker; CEDAR RAPIDS, Lavina Dragoo, Eleanore Fullerton, Dr. and Mrs. A. W. Meyer, Virginia Olson, Lillian Serbousek, Dr. and Mrs. Robert Vane, Robbie Vane, Pauline Wershofen; CHARLES CITY, C. J. Ellis; DAVENPORT, Lewis Blevins, Edwin E. Meyer, Mrs. Peter C. Petersen, Sr., Peter C. Petersen, Jr., Lowell Spring; DES MOINES, Lydia R. Bailey, Mr. and Mrs. Woodward H. Brown, Gladys M. Gray, Bill Houser, Dr. and Mrs. Harold R. Peasley, Bruce F. Stiles; ESTHERVILLE, M. L. Jones; GARNER, Dick Doughan; IOWA CITY, Mr. and Mrs. Fred W. Kent, Dr. and Mrs. Peter Laude, Mr. and Mrs. S. H. MacDonald; KEOKUK, Mrs. C. W. Carter, Mr. and Mrs. John Hass, Mrs. Lynore Holsuer, Mrs. Gerald L. Huiskamp, James Kettering, William Talbott, Mrs. Hazel Timberman, Alois J. Weber, Mrs. F. F. Wood; MANLY, Patt Lake; MARSHALLTOWN, Dorothy Brunner; NORTHWOOD, Mrs. John Bottleman; OTTUMWA, Mr. and Mrs. Charles C. Ayres, Jr., Jean Bolam; PLEASANTVILLE, Mrs. Gladys Black; SIGOURNEY, Mr. and Mrs. Forrest Millikin; SICUX CITY, Mrs. W. W. Barrett Mr. and Mrs. Darrell Hanna; WATERLOO, Myrle M. Burk, Russell H. Hays; WEST BEND, Shirley Pritchett; WHAT CHEER, Karen Wemer; WINTHROP, F. J. Pierce; GOLDEN, COLORADO, Dennis L. Carter; JOY, ILLINOIS, Mr. and Mrs. Ted Greer; WASHINGTON, D. C., Mr. and Mrs. Paul Dowling. Total registered, 76.

**Composite List of Birds Seen on the Field Trip, May 10, 1959.**—Great Blue and Green Herons, Mallard, Blue-winged Teal, Am. Widgeon, Wood Duck, Lesser Scaup, Turkey Vulture, Cooper's, Red-tailed, Red-shouldered and Swainson's Hawks, Bobwhite, Ring-necked Pheasant, King Rail, Sora, Am. Coot, Killdeer, Common Snipe, Spotted and Solitary Sandpipers, Herring and Ring-billed Gulls, Forster's, Common and Black Terns, Mourning Dove, Yellow-billed and Black-billed Cuckoos, Barred Owl, Whip-poor-will, Common Nighthawk, Chimney Swift, Ruby-throated Hummingbird, Belted Kingfisher, Yellow-shafted Flicker, Red-bellied, Red-headed, Hairy and Downy Woodpeckers, Eastern Kingbird, Great Crested Flycatcher, Eastern Phoebe, Traill's and Least Flycatchers, Eastern Wood Pewee, Horned Lark, Tree, Bank, Rough-winged, Barn and Cliff Swallows, Purple Martin, Blue Jay, Crow, Black-capped Chickadee, Tufted Titmouse, White-breasted Nuthatch, House, Bewick's and Carolina Wrens, Mockingbird, Catbird, Brown Thrasher, Robin, Wood, Swainson's and Gray-cheeked Thrushes, Eastern Bluebird, Cedar Waxwing, Loggerhead Shrike, Starling, White-eyed, Bell's, Yellow-throated, Red-eyed and Warbling Vireos, Black-and-White, Blue-winged, Tennessee, Nashville, Yellow, Magnolia, Cape May, Myrtle, Black-throated Green,



Blackburnian, Chestnut-sided, Blackpoll and Palm Warblers, Ovenbird, Northern and Louisiana Waterthrushes, Yellowthroat, Yellow-breasted Chat, Am. Redstart, House Sparrow, Bobolink, Eastern Meadowlark, Red-winged Blackbird, Orchard and Baltimore Orioles, Common Grackle, Brown-headed Cowbird, Scarlet Tanager, Cardinal, Rosebreasted Grosbeak, Indigo Bunting, Dickcissel, Am. Goldfinch, Rufous-sided Towhee, Savannah, Grasshopper, Vesper, Lark, Chipping, Field, Harris', White-crowned, White-throated, Lincoln's and Song Sparrows. Total, 122.

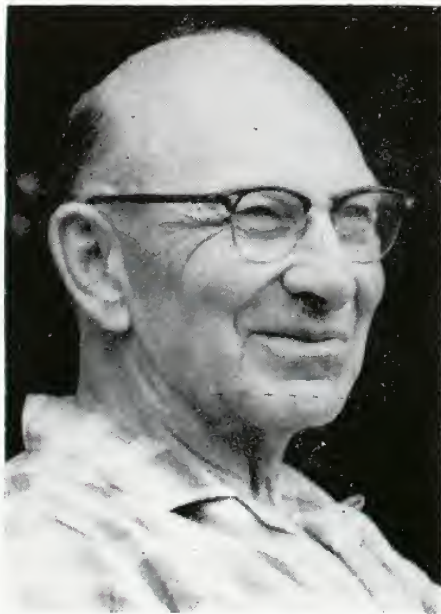
On Saturday, May 9, these additional birds were seen: Pied-billed Grebe, Common Egret, Sparrow Hawk, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, Acadian Flycatcher, Solitary Vireo, Prothonotary, Golden-winged and Bay-beasted Warblers.

### A LETTER FROM OUR NEW PRESIDENT

Dear Members:

Since my election as your President came as a surprise to me, I had no opportunity to give any official consideration to the future welfare of our Union before assuming my duties. However, there are three subjects which merit discussion.

**OUR FALL MEETING.** In the past, we have met for luncheon without any opportunity to do any birding. Many of the members have been of the opinion that it is not worth while to drive a long distance just to have lunch together. We have accepted the invitation of Myrle Jones of Estherville to meet there for our fall get-together. This is excellent birding territory, so I suggested to Mr. Jones that this meeting might be more interesting if we could arrange a Sunday morning observation trip for those who would be willing to arrive in Estherville on Saturday so they could make a trip the next morning. You will receive notices of our plans for this meeting.



DR. PETER P. LAUDE

**THE REGULAR SPRING MEETING.** We have accepted the invitation of our members in Waterloo to meet with them in the spring. We know the territory around Waterloo and Cedar Falls provides everything to be desired in the way of bird observation. We shall continue to have an observation trip or trips on Saturday and also on Sunday. Peter C. Petersen, Jr. of Davenport has accepted the chairmanship of the Program Committee. I feel sure that there is no one in the Union who would work any harder to provide a good program than he.

**OUR MEMBERSHIP.** I am appointing each member of the Union to serve on the membership committee. It has been suggested that Editor Pierce be requested to place a few application blanks in the next issue of Iowa Bird Life so that each of you will be provided with these blanks. If you have any opportunity to use them, do so.

**SUGGESTIONS.** The saying is still true, "Two heads are better than one." Your officers and Executive Council will be delighted to receive any suggestions by which we can make the next year a very successful year.

Sincerely, PETER P. LAUDE

#### GENERAL NOTES

**Pigeon Hawk in Clinton County.**—On February 26, 1959, I found a pigeon Hawk that had been killed beside the Memorial Cemetery in Clinton, Iowa. The bird was in too poor condition to make it into a study skin, but photographs were taken.—JAMES HODGES, 1514 East High St., Davenport, Iowa.

**Evening Grosbeaks at Decorah.**—This species appeared at the feeding stations of Mrs. Alden Bauder and Mrs. Robert Hunt in Decorah. They were first seen on February 7, 1959, and returned to the two stations for a period of about ten days. There were seven birds, three males and four females. We were thrilled with our unusual Evening Grosbeak visitors.—MRS. ALDEN W. BAUDER, Decorah, Iowa.

**Birds at Winter Feeding Station.**—I had a good list of birds at my feeding station last winter. The only unusual species was a Vesper Sparrow. I also had about 20 Harris' and six Song Sparrows. Cardinals were common and I counted 27 one day; nearly any day 18 to 20 could be counted. A flock of 11 Mourning Doves stayed in the neighborhood and were seen quite often, but did not come to my feeding station.—RICHARD A. GUTHRIE, Woodward, Iowa.

**Sandhill Cranes at West Okoboji.**—I saw five Sandhill Cranes flying over West Okoboji on April 5, 1959. My nephew, John Tonsfeldt, called my attention to them, thinking they were geese. I grabbed my glasses, ran outdoors and fortunately, the birds flew directly over home, and about 100 yards high; no mistake in identification. I had always wanted to see one outside of a museum and this was my first opportunity.—EARL T. ROSE, Iowa Conservation Commission, Spirit Lake, Iowa.

**Scarcity of Nesting Records of Clay-colored Sparrow in Iowa.**—In studying the breeding range of the Clay-colored Sparrow while preparing a life history account for the second volume of the Fringillidae in the life history series of the United States National Museum, I found no published records of nesting since 1933 (DuMont, Philip A. A Revised List of the Birds of Iowa, 1933). Inquiries indicate there are no eggs or nests of this species from Iowa in the collections of the Iowa State Department of History and Archives, Iowa State College, Iowa State Teachers College, or Coe College. William Youngworth tells me he has never found a nest of the Clay-colored Sparrow in the Sioux City region. He made a search as recently as June, 1959. Is the Clay-colored Sparrow as rare a nesting bird in Iowa as the records indicate? If not, then published records of nesting, supported by collected material, are needed soon to make possible a correct statement by me in the life history now in preparation, of this sparrow's present status in Iowa.—OSCAR M. ROOT, Brooks School, North Andover, Massachusetts.

**Notes from Johnson County, Spring of 1959.**—Not since 1952 had there been normal precipitation, so the outstanding feature of the spring was an abundance of water—an excess of 6 inches to June 1. Not only did the rains fill up all ponds and marshes, including Swan Lake which had been dry for five years, but the big Coralville flood-control dam was put into operation. It caught the early April flood to form a lake some 20 miles long and 2 miles wide in places. This, with the enlarged Lake Macbride (five times the original area), created a new water area which attracted waterfowl in

great numbers. A plane survey by the Conservation Commission on April 6 estimated 125,000 ducks. Nearly all species were present. Rafts of 500-1000 Canvasbacks and 50-60 Buffleheads were present for several weeks. The only species not recorded was the Red-breasted Merganser. Even after the Reservoir Pool was let down after the flood, the remaining water areas seemed to be attractive to the ducks. As of June 1, there were Blue-winged Teal in large numbers (three young on June 6 at Swan Lake), Mallard, Pintail, Ring-neck, Scaup, Shovelers, Hooded Merganser, Wood Duck, Gadwall, Baldpate, and Ruddy Ducks. During the high-water period, Herring and Ring-billed Gulls were present in numbers 500-1000, and of course large numbers of Coots, many of which began to nest in Swan Lake (15 to 20 nests) and other places (young at Muskrat Slough on May 29).

Early shore-birds arrived in numbers and remained for several weeks—both species of Yellowlegs, Pectorals, Wilson's Snipe (150 in one area), Dowitchers (20), Willets (9), and one Hudsonian Godwit spent two weeks in one shallow pond. Wilson's Phalaropes (3) were still around on June 7. In contrast nearly all the later small shore-birds were missing, only single birds or very small flocks seen in spite of special effort to find them. Yellow-headed Blackbirds appeared and were still present in early June. A dozen American Egrets and a Snowy Egret on May 3, a Yellow-crowned Night Heron on May 24, and 1000 Black Terns on May 23, helped to make the new water areas most rewarding to us.

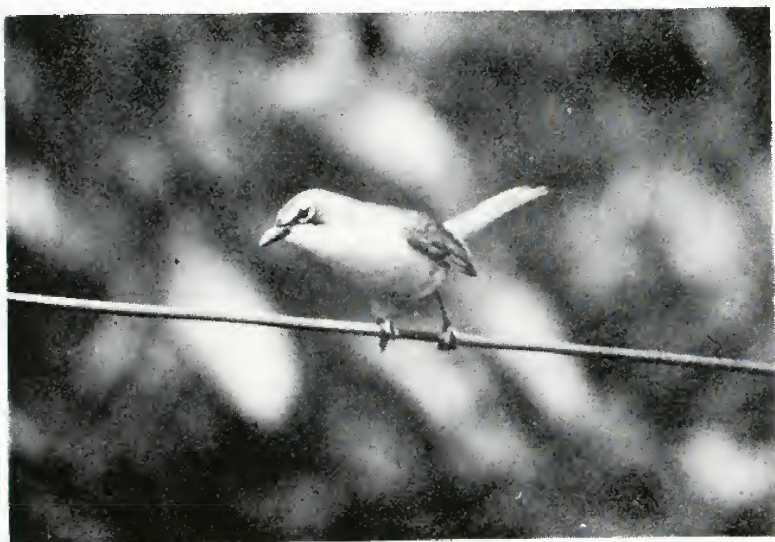
The spring vacation was quite regular with an early wave the third week of March and a steady pattern of new arrivals including warblers the first two weeks in May.



SNOWY EGRET, MAY 3, 1959

Photographed by Fred W. Kent in the muddy pools of Hoosier Creek bottoms which had been flooded by the Coralville Reservoir spring flood. The creek empties into the Iowa River at the north edge of Macbride State Park. The Snowy was seen again on May 16.





YELLOW-BREASTED CHAT (F. W. Kent photograph)

On March 1, we counted 27 Short-eared Owls at Conesville. Tom Morrissey counted 31 Marsh Hawks near Swan Lake on March 3. In the first week of April we had 50 Fox Sparrows in one day. There were fewer White-throated Sparrows in the past spring and almost no White-crowns. In early June we found Mockingbirds, Orchard Orioles, Bell's Vireos, a White-eyed Vireo, and Yellow-breasted Chats. Field trips on May 2, 16 and 23, gave us counts of 107, 124 and 95 species, respectively, without special effort to pile up a high total list.—FRED W. KENT, 7 East Market St., Iowa City, Iowa.

**Notes from Waterloo and the Sweet Marsh Area.**—In late January I saw a Starling with the middle of its tail feathers entirely white, the first time I had seen albinism in this species. On March 28, 1959, I had a pleasant trip near our sanctuary area, when great flocks of ducks were flying over the field flooded by Crane Creek. I identified 12 species. There were hundreds of Mallards, many Pintails, a few Gadwalls, some Widgeons, three Redheads, a few Green-winged Teal, six Blue-winged Teal, 10 Shovelers, about 20 Ring-necks, 100 or more Scaups, four Common Mergansers, and four Common Goldeneyes. A mile north of the sanctuary road we saw a pair of Hooded Mergansers. On April 9, I saw Wood Ducks at close range, as well as a partially albino Hairy Woodpecker which was mottled tan and white over most of its back. I got very good views of its strange pattern of plumage.

April 12, 1959, was a cool, windy day at Sweet Marsh near Tripoli, with strong waves working against the ice in the lake and giving off tinkling sounds. The first birds I saw were a Rough-legged Hawk and an Osprey. The Osprey had a dead fish in its talons. It was no doubt freshly killed, but there were hundreds of dead fish in the melting ice, an aftermath of a severe winter fish kill due to low oxygen in the marsh. I soon saw a Turkey Vulture, my first for this area. Hundreds of ducks were flying over—Mallards in great numbers, Scaups, Green- and Blue-winged Teal, Buffleheads, Goldeneyes, and Pintails. I also saw the first Coots of the year, as well as a Wilson's Snipe, a Tree Swallow and Purple Martin. Later

I saw about 20 Herring Gulls on the ice, several Shovelers and Gadwalls.

On April 25, I went on a field trip to Big Marsh near Parkersburg with nine ladies from Cedar Falls. We had a fine list of 79 species, including Canada Goose, Blue Goose, Eared Grebe, Horned Grebe, Hooded Merganser, Water Pipit and LeConte's Sparrow.—RUSSELL HAYS, Waterloo, Iowa.

#### FALL MEETING, ESTHERVILLE, SEPTEMBER 13

For those who drive to Estherville on Saturday, September 12, there will be an early Sunday morning breakfast at Fort Defiance State Park. Bring your appetite and bird glasses. The Sunday noon meal will be pot-luck as usual, with drinks furnished.—M. L. JONES.

#### RECENT BIRD BOOKS

THE BIRDS OF ALASKA, by Ira N. Gabrielson and Frederick C. Lincoln (Stackpole Co., Harrisburg, Pa., 1959; cloth, 8vo size, pp. i-xi+1-922, with 10 colored plates by O. J. Murie and E. R. Kalmbach, 1 map & 1 fig.; price, \$15.00).

Collectors of "State" bird books will welcome this newest addition to a long series. Its publication was nicely timed with Alaska's becoming our 49th state.

The book had its conception in 1942, when the authors decided that a vast store of unpublished information reposing in the files of the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service should be worked up into a book on the birds of Alaska. Almost without exception, bird observers had visited widely scattered parts of Alaska, and none had covered more than a small part of the enormous area. Bringing together the published information, then combining it with the records secured on the authors' own extensive bird trips to various localities, was a task of first magnitude. The research and writing took 14 years. The finished volume is a reference work primarily, and will be the standard reference work on Alaska ornithology for many future years, a necessity for those who expect to do any work pertaining to the birds of the region.

The first chapter covers 'History of Alaskan Ornithology' and will be interesting to most readers. The history falls into three periods—the Russian, which began with the discovery of Alaska in 1741 and ended with transfer to United States in 1867; the American period of exploration; and the modern period. Other chapters describe 'Some Interesting Aspects of Alaskan Ornithology,' 'Migration,' 'Alaskan Ecological Zones,' and 'Introduced Game Birds.' Then follows the systematic list of birds found in Alaska—321 species and 414 subspecies. This section takes up 774 pages. There are unusually detailed descriptions of plumages, and information on nests and eggs if known. A discussion of general range is followed by the range in Alaska, with numerous records given. Under 'Haunts and Habits' life histories and anecdotes of observation are given. These passages are usually brief and the general reader will wish for more of this interesting material.

A 'Gazetteer' in the back of the book provides a key to the localities and place names mentioned. The bibliography of 57 pages in small type shows the extent of publications on Alaskan birds—a rich field for further reading.

A serious defect is the absence of range maps. With maps the reader would have at a glance the information that must be gleaned from long paragraphs of description. The dearth of pictures will also be noticed at once. In a book of this price fine illustrations in considerable number are expected as a matter of course. Although well printed with attractive type, the use of coated paper makes the book very heavy. This paper is usually chosen for publications with many halftones. It is not justified here for there are no halftones.

It is a very solid work, packed with important data, much of it printed in small type, and one that must go into every reference library.—F. J. P.

INVESTIGATIONS OF RING-NECKED PHEASANTS IN ILLINOIS, by William B. Robertson, Jr. (Illinois Dept. of Conservation, Div. of Game Management, Springfield; Technical Bull. No. 1, paper binding, 8vo size, pp i-v+1-138, with 29 illustrations; sent free upon request to publisher).

This is the first publication in a new series of technical bulletins being sponsored by the Illinois Department of Conservation. The section of Wildlife Research is headed by Dr. Thomas G. Scott, formerly of Ames, Iowa.

The bulletin contains the historical record of early introduction of pheasants into Illinois. It traces the development of hunting and regulations relating to the sport, with a discussion of winter behavior due to geographic differences. In east-central Illinois, where the pheasants were near the southern border of their range, they depended little upon heavy cover; in the northern part of the state, winter flocks were larger and needed the sheltering cover.

Other sections of the book cover observations on the spring break-up of wintering flocks, breeding behavior, nesting studies and size of hatches, and nutritional and weather factors as related to the limitation of pheasant range in the state. Upland game-bird technicians will find this bulletin filled with valuable information on this important game bird.—F. J. P.

#### MEMBERSHIP NEWS

George W. Worley, formerly of Iowa State Teachers College, Cedar Falls, moved with his family to Albuquerque, New Mexico, where he became director of a watershed conservation project of the University of New Mexico. The University received a grant of \$100,000 from the Charles Lathrop Pack Forestry Foundation to finance a three-year program in watershed conservation, which will attempt to create a better public understanding of the nature and importance of good watershed management practices. Presenting to the public in popular form the interrelationship of topography, geology, climate and soil in the watershed-water yield phenomena, the project attempts to furnish knowledge of the factors affecting run-off, soil erosion and floods. Television, radio, motion pictures, workshops, exhibits, speakers, and other available media of communication will be utilized in the program, as directed by Mr. Worley.

Writing under date of April 26, 1959, Mr. Worley said, in part: "Not much interest in birds here—at least to the point of organization. I am running on to a few bird students either through questioning or accident, and am hoping to have some interesting company on trips soon. I have traveled the state a little, but more to get acquainted with the geography rather than people or birds, although I have had some interesting sights. I saw what I believe to be a Dusky Grouse while up in the snow country above Santa Fe. Long-billed Curlews were sighted in northeast New Mexico. Linnets replace House Sparrows here to a great extent in one's dooryard and around the campus. My work is going quite well and is intensely interesting and challenging. We're in the process of producing 27-minute sound and color film on watersheds at the present time. It should be ready by fall."

Mrs. Helen (W. W.) Barrett attended the May meeting of the Nebraska-South Dakota Ornithologists' Union, held jointly this year at Yankton. She went with Mr. and Mrs. Robert L. Nicholson, of Sioux City, and reported a fine convention in all respects—programs well organized by the committees, perfect weather, and the beautiful Lewis and Clark Lake offering many opportunities. They took advantage of a boat trip offered by the Engineers. She said: "Of interest especially were the thousands of Cliff swallows nesting on the chalk and shale banks lining the South Dakota shore between Springfield and Yankton; also saw Double-crested Cormorants' nests (last year's, probably), a Great Blue Heron's nest with young, and a hawk's nest above the swallow's nests on the cliff, female sitting on nest."